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ABSTRACT

Designed to reveal the nature of widespread pejorative orientations faced by youth in an adult world, the diagnostic tool consists of a 9-item inventory which is to be self-administered in group situations and self-analyzed by the subject. The tool provides a means of measuring and investigating the patterns of coexistence among three different forms of prejudice: (1) stereotypes (cultural traits, social patterns, personality, or biological characteristics attributed to the target category as negative characteristics): (2) affect prejudice (dislike, hate, preference of avoidance or social distance): and (3) normative or evaluative prejudice (belief in manifest forms of institutionalized discrimination). The primary end is self diagnosis and revelation which, hopefully, will trigger reflection and serious discussion and thus eliminate prejudice. Appendix A consists of an evaluation enclosure concerning adult prejudice toward youths. The report closes with an open invitation to join a consortium of Social Scientists to investigate the nature and strength of adults' prejudices toward youth and to work out meliorative strategies. (CM)

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ADULTS' PREJUDICE TOWARD YOUTH: A DIAGNOSTIC TOOL*

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Dedication and Acknowledgements

This tool was aimed at revealing the nature of widespread perjorative orientations faced by youth in an adult world. It is dedicated to all youth who struggle against the false beliefs and ill-feelings we, the adults of society, have put in their way.

I want to thank in particular my children - Bill, Lisa, Faith, Andy and Mike - for making me aware that even those of us who feel we are free of prejudice are carriers of these damaging orientations. Their willingness to honestly express themselves and to fight against these prejudices stimulated my interest in trying to do something about them.

The diagnostic tool described here was developed collaboratively with members of a seminar, "Working With Mexican American Youth," for staff of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas A&M University during July, 1979. The members of the seminar and co-developers of this instrument were:

Lynn Copeland
Nelson Jacob
George McArthur
David Ruesink
Lynne Thibodeaux
Mina Valdez

Adults And Youth

From the perspective of most teen-agers the world seems to be a constant struggle to escape the oppressive presence of adults. Their ability to achieve self-realization, some measure of social freedom, and control of their own short-run and long-run destinies always appears to be sorely restricted by adults. They are constantly victimized by the negative judgements and evaluations of adults: parents and older sibs, uncles and aunts, teachers in school, neighbors, and fellow employees and bosses at work. The heavy evaluative and judgemental atmosphere - usually dark, negative in its coloring - seems pervasive. They can not seem to escape it! Of course they rebel! And, some take drastic measures to escape - often destroying themselves in the process. Others become hostile - "the Angry Young Man" or "the Cry-Baby Young Woman." Some few over - compensate in their adaptations to adult demands and become alienated from their age peers: "the teacher's pets," "the brown-nosers," and "the goody-goodies." Youth move in the adult world from one judgemental setting to another; only the judges change, the negative evaluations and directive tendencies remain constant.

Through my extensive contacts with youth as research subjects, as students in my courses, and as members of my family, I have become increasingly concerned about the way youth perceive adults and the way adults orient themselves toward youth. Perhaps, my initial interest in this social problem was stimulated by my evolving self-awareness of my own patterned ways of relating to young people as a superior being. Certainly, this self-awareness opened my eyes and made me more sensitive to the broader patterns observable in youth-adult relations.

Intensive personal contacts with youth in diverse settings as a result of research efforts since 1976 have led me to develop a firm conviction that youth feel generally alienated from adults: they feel adults really don't care about their needs, aspirations, and feelings. I found this to be true in Taos County, New Mexico, Holmes County, Ohio, and in both East and South Texas. In the following poem I tried to capture the essence of youths' feelings in this regard:

A Cry Of Youth*

Tried some "snow", drink too much, sex worries me -
Know what I mean?
But those who really care seem so few -
and far between.
Someone who really cares about helping me,
I have never seen -
In the schools, the courthouse, the church -
or clubs for the teens.
Where can I go? What can I do? No one cares -
do you?

Youth As A "Minority Group"

I am often amazed at the fact that when we are cataloguing the negative social categories in our society subject to injust and perjorative patterns of treatment that we often include women and elderly along with the obvious racial and ethnic minorities, but seldom or ever do we think of youth in this regard.** Yet, I think that youth, particularly teen-agers, receive more severe and strongly patterned negative prejudice and social discrim-

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*Published in Symposium On Minority Youth Employment And Rural Disadvantaged Youth: Policies And Programs (Washington, D.C.: Institute For Economic Development, 1980, P. IV-4).

**See my paper, "Structural Elements Of the Determination Of Negative Social Status: Conceptual Reflections On The Notion Of Minority Group Status" presented in another section of these meetings.

ination than some of these other groupings. I suggest one reason for this is that sociologists behave in a reactive manner in the attention they give so-called minority groups. Until a broad social movement is initiated and clear leaders and organizations evolve - that begin to have success in gaining attention of the political establishment - we tend to ignore negative status categories. In my judgement we ought to be out in front calling attention to the needs of negative status categories and helping them to organize to melioration their social problems. Certainly I hope this paper serves in some small way this purpose for teen-age youth in our society.

The fact that youth feel alienated from adults in our society has clear significance to them - it is dysfunctional in hindering them from obtaining life counseling and guidance. We need not wonder that youth turn to each other for social comfort and advice, if we understand that they know we generally feel negative toward them and give low priority to their pressing personal needs. Youth generally perceive a host of pressing, important problems and many don't know where to go to find help in resolving them. Results from a recent study of Mexican American youth in South Texas clearly demonstrate this. As is shown in Table 1, most of these youth, regardless of place of residence, are concerned about a wide variety of problems. What is more they demonstrated strong concern about going to related adults of all kinds to seek help in reference to many of them, Table 2. These are direct consequences of perceived negative prejudices adults hold toward them.

Table 1. South Texas Mexican American Youth's Self-defined Causes of Concern and Anxiety by Type of Place of Residence, 1978-79

Focus of Concern:	Metro [1] (N=89)	Nonmetro [2] (N=64)
	—— % Showing Strong Concern [3] ——	
A. Moral Behavior		
(1) Dating and sex	24	35
(7) Drinking	22	42
(9) Use of drugs	26	47
(10) Being religious	33	46
B. Social Relations		
(4) Getting along/parents	71	71
(6) Having friends	57	73
(5) Feelings about myself	60	59
C. Social Status Achievements		
(2) Studies	69	75
(3) Future job	76	78
(4) Having money	48	49

1. Brownsville, Texas
2. Brooks Co., Texas
3. Percent indicating either "very concerned" or "somewhat concerned"

Table 2. Proportion of Cameron Co. and Brooks Co. Youth Indicating They Have Difficulty In Finding Somebody To Give Them Advise On Particular Problems

Personal Problems	Cameron Co. % Yes	Brooks Co. % Yes
Family Problems	33.0	32.8
Feelings About Self	30.7	45.3
Serious Personal Trouble	29.5	50.0
Moral Problems		
Dating and Sex	22.7	34.4
Drinking	12.5	29.7
Use of Drugs	26.1	40.6
Things Friends Are In To	25.0	48.4
School and Career Plans		
Problems With Teachers, etc.	23.9	25.0
Studies	29.5	32.8
Career Plans	29.5	34.4

Conception Of Prejudice: Toward A Diagnostic Tool

I have developed a more extensive statement on perjorative treatment of "minority groups" elsewhere; consequently, I will just briefly define here the direct conceptual frame guiding the diagnostic tool included on the following two pages.*

The more general notion of negative social prejudice includes at least three different forms of negative orientations directed by a member (or members) of one social category toward members of another social category. These are as follows:

(1) Stereotypes: categorical beliefs that picture the target category as having negative characteristics (i.e., cultural traits, social patterns, personality, or biological characteristics).

(2) Affect Prejudice: categorical pattern of negative sentiment or feeling for the target category (i.e., dislike, hate, preference of avoidance or social distance).

(3) Normative or Evaluative Prejudice: categorical support for maintenance or creation of structures of oppression or exclussion. The belief in manifest forms of institutionalized discrimination.

I propose that these three different forms of prejudice can vary independently. Furthermore, I suggest they may have different causes and consequences, and, that they vary in their probable relationships to different forms of negative social discrimination. Consequently, it is important to measure them separately and to begin investigating the patterns of coexistence among them. The diagnostic tool described here provides this capability. I think only a "true bigot" would demonstrate patterned

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* Kuvlesky, Structural Elements, pp. 13-18

The inventory given below was developed to determine how much and what kinds of prejudices adults have toward young people. We know this device works: all it requires is that you be as honest as you can in saying how you feel. Nobody else will see your responses.

The Inventory

Please indicate how you honestly feel about each of the following statements by checking the blank under the answer that best represents how you feel about each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I prefer working with adults to working with young people.	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
2. School administrators should enforce strict dress codes.	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
3. Teenage workers should not have to be paid the full minimum wage.	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
4. I prefer to have families without teenagers as neighbors.	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
5. Teenagers don't pick up after themselves.	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
6. The music teenagers listen to is just noise!	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
7. The age for becoming a legal adult should have been left at 21.	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
8. There are some places I refuse to go because they are overrun with teens.	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
9. Teenagers are rude.	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

	Total Scores
A. Social Distance Prejudice: Items 2, 6, 10	_____
B. Stereotypes: Items 7, 8, 11	_____
C. Normative Prejudice: Items 3, 5, 9	_____
Grand Total	_____

Add up the numerical value of the responses checked for each set of items listed above. The total scale scores will range in each case from 9 to 0: the higher the score the more prejudice exhibited. These scores for each type of prejudice can be interpreted as follows:

PREJUDICE		SCORE
Low	=	0-3
Substantial	=	4-5
High	=	6-9

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What reasons do you have for the prejudice you have toward youth?

2. How do these prejudices influence how you behave toward young people and how they react to you?

Next, total the three summary scores listed above. The Grand Total Prejudice Score will range from 27 to 0: again the higher the score the more prejudice exhibited.

high degrees of all three types toward any given social target. Consequently, the "total score" - sum of the three parts - could be viewed as a rough measure of "bigotry."

Because this tool was developed to be self-administered in group situations - and self-analyzed by the subject - it was imperative that it be short, interesting, and easy to score and interpret. Consequently, it lacks as much precision in differentiation as a rigorous research scholar might prefer. Put substantive information to be used for analysis by the researcher is a secondary end: and, should depend entirely on the open willingness of the subject to submit his or her results. The primary end is self diagnosis and revelation: achieving the recognition that, "I am prejudiced!" This hopefully will trigger reflection and serious discussion. We can not work to meliorate prejudices people do not know they have. Our first step is to demonstrate that a problem exists. Creating self-awareness of prejudice does this, assuming most do not like to view themselves as prejudiced. I know from broad use of similar instruments developed for Black - White and Mexican American-Anglo social contexts that the instrument accomplishes these ends.

Development Of The Diagnostic Tool

The final nine item prejudice inventory already described was developed with my seven colleagues from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service (see Acknowledgements), all of whom had a strong interest in youth programs and many years of experience in working with them. After several days of intensive discussion we put a long listing of possible items on the blackboard for each of three types of social prejudice (cognitive, affect (social distance)*, and normative). We proceeded to discuss these one at a time until we achieved consensus on their potential and wording. From the residual we selected the 5 items of each of the three types we agreed were best and decided to do a limited, small scale pretest on them. We agreed each to try and find a "normal" adult - one not involved with the University - and ask them tc complete the inventory. The initial inventory and a detailed analysis of pretest responses to it are presented in Appendix A. Below I have reproduced my general reactions to the pretest and how we moved from the initial 15 items to the 9 items appearing in the finished diagnostic tool.

> In general the response patterns overall were good. Most items differentiated well and the total package differentiated very well (see Table 1 enclosed). The subjective judgements of the work group members (see Table 2) matched fairly well my evaluation of response patterns. Our aim was to produce as small a number of items in the inventory as possible. In keeping with this objective I decided to cut down to three items in each of the three prejudice sets. I did this by deleting the following initial items:

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*We did a small pretest to see if we could measure affect prejudice directly: for instance, by asking respondents to answer the following question, "How do you feel about teen-agers generally?" Answers: Dislike them very much; Dislike them; Like them; Like them very much." We got very skewed results and didn't trust the validity of the answers. Consequently, we moved to using "Social Distance" as an indicator of affect.

Affect (S.D) - #13, #15

Stereotype - #1, #4

Normative - #12, #14

The job at hand now is to find out how well this tool works in uncovering general patterns of prejudice toward youth and in getting adults to recognize and admit they hold these perjorative orientations. I am seeking your assistance in helping me to do this job.

A Program For Collaborative Evaluative Research

During the next year it is my aim to develop a consortium of a dozen colleagues to help me pretest the utility of this instrument with diverse adult populations. I think it is necessary to have included in this evaluation diversity along the following dimensions of social variability:

(1) Race-Ethnicity

(2) SES

(3) Gender

(4) Place of Residence Type

(5) Age

If the inventory works well, the results of collaborative research would also provide us with substantive results of value, too: information on the extent to which types of prejudice toward youth exist generally in our society and how these vary by the social attributes given above. As far as I know nothing in the way of reliable empirical data has been reported in this regard.

If you are interested in being a part of this collaborative effort please fill out the attached form and send it to me.

APPENDIX A:
EVALUATION ENCLOSURE

A. Adult Prejudice Toward Youths - Inventory

Please indicate how you feel about each of the following statements. (Check one blank for each statement.)

	(4) Strongly Agree	(3) Agree	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly Disagree
1. Teen-agers are only interested in having fun.	____	____	____	____
2. I prefer working with adults to working with young people.	____	____	____	____
3. School administrators need to enforce strict dress codes.	____	____	____	____
4. Teens are irresponsible.	____	____	____	____
5. Teenage workers should not have to be paid the full minimum wage.	____	____	____	____
6. I prefer to have families without teenagers as neighbors.	____	____	____	____
7. Teenagers don't pick up after themselves.	____	____	____	____
8. The music teenagers listen to is just noise!	____	____	____	____
9. The age for becoming a legal adult should have been left at 21.	____	____	____	____
10. There are some places I refuse to go because they are overrun with teens.	____	____	____	____
11. Teens are rude.	____	____	____	____
12. Teenagers should follow rules set by parents regarding night hours as long as they live at home.	____	____	____	____
13. I do not care to have teenagers visiting in my home.	____	____	____	____
14. Any teen caught smoking pot or using drugs should be put in jail.	____	____	____	____
15. I don't care to have teenagers involved in adult conversations.	____	____	____	____

Table 1. Overview of Pre-Test Responses

Item	Response (Prejudice) (High) 4	3	2	(Low) 1	N.R.	Average
1		1	3	2		1.8
2	1	2	2		1	2.8
3		3	2	1		2.3
4		1	3	2		2.3
5		3	2	1		1.8
6		2	1	3		1.8
7		4	1	1		2.5
8		4	2			2.7
9	1	1	4			2.5
10	1	4		1		2.8
11		2	4			2.3
12	3	2		1		3.2
13		1	2	3		1.6
14			5	1		1.8
15			3	3		1.5

Items averaging below 2: #1, #5, #6, #13, #14, #15
(Low Prejudice)

Items averaging over 2.5: #2, #8, #10, #12
(High Prejudice)

Items not differentiating well: Low = #14, #15
High = #10, #12
(Items circled on table differentiate the best.)

Evaluation:
1. Too many items with low score average relative to high score average. In deleting items try to get some balance of these.
2. Try to achieve balance in responses attaining consistent extreme score if any are kept.
3. Best items are those with more or less equal responses on both sides of 2/3 break.

Table 2.

Overview of Reactions to Adult Prejudice Toward Youth Instrument.

		Suggested Delete	Word Change
(St.)	1		
	2		
(N)	3	LT, GM	M.V.
(St.)	4	LT, GM	
(N)	5	DR	M.V.
	6		
(St.)	7		
(St.)	8	M.V.	LT
(N)	9		
	10		
(St.)	11	M.V.	GM
(N)	12	DR	DR
	13	LT, GM	
(N)	14		LT, GM
	15	M.V.	

Developing A Diagnostic Tool For Revealing Adults' Prejudice Toward Youth: A Proposed Collaborative Effort.

If you are interested in joining a consortium of Social Scientists I plan to organize to investigate the nature and strength of adults' prejudices toward youth in our society, and to work out meliorative strategies in this regard, fill out this form and send it to me: Professor William P. Kuvlesky, Rural Sociology, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

_____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

Type of Adult Population You Are Interested In: _____

_____